

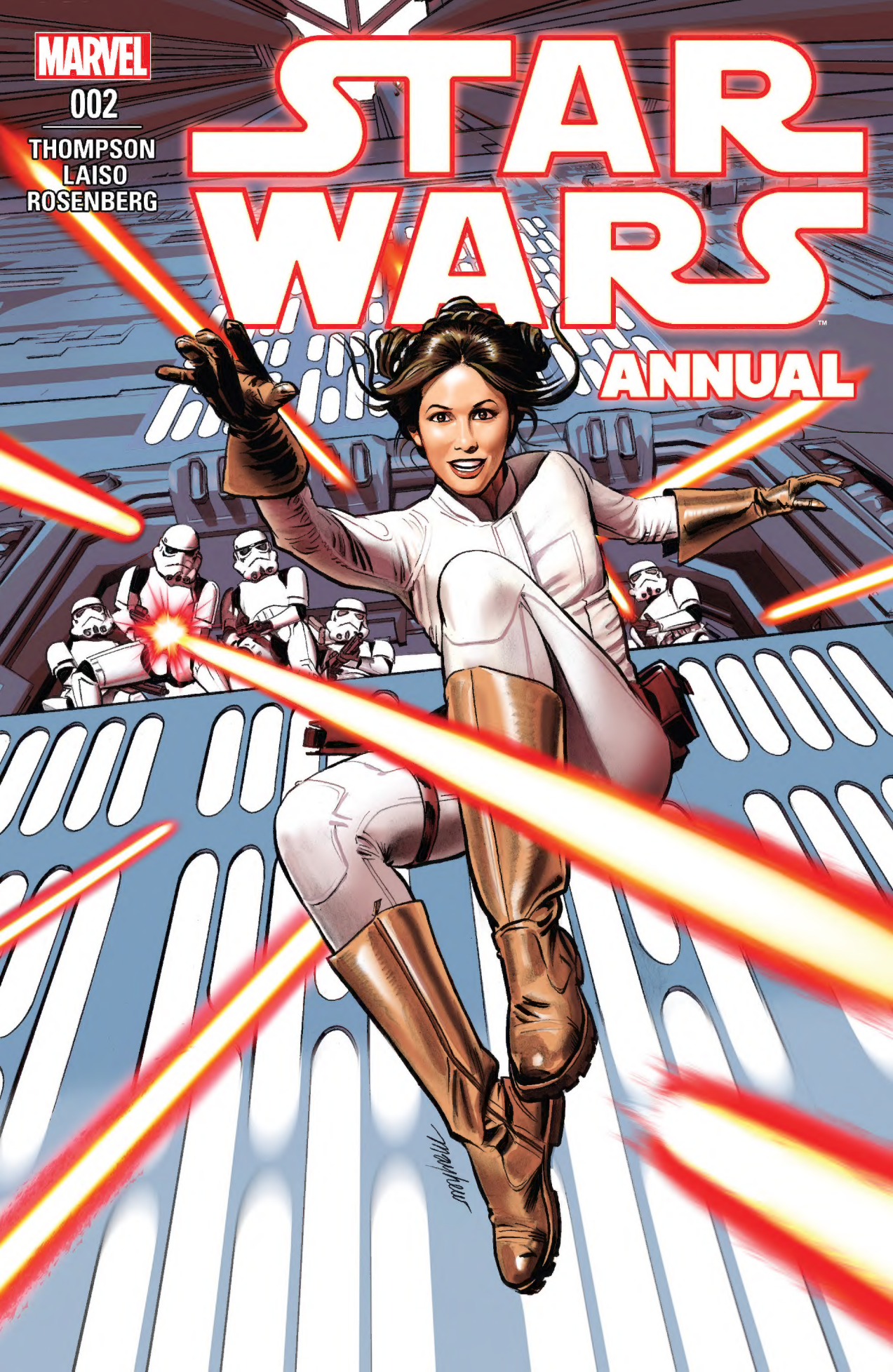
MARVEL

002

THOMPSON
LAISO
ROSENBERG

STAR WARS

ANNUAL



STAR WARS

Annual II

It is a pivotal moment in the galaxy. As the Empire continues to exert its oppressive force, the Rebel Alliance stands strong against their tyranny for the good of all.

While heroic Rebellion agents like Princess Leia of Alderaan strive to undermine Imperial strongholds, the Galactic Empire continues to dominate and has doubled its efforts to eliminate any who would stand against its rule.

Some choose to fight against waves of Imperial stormtroopers, while others choose the relative safety and security of obedience—and then there are those who refuse to take a side at all....

KELLY THOMPSON
Writer

EMILIO LAISO
Artist

RACHELLE ROSENBERG
Colorist

VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
Letterer

MIKE MAYHEW
Cover

HEATHER ANTOS
Assistant Editor

JORDAN D. WHITE
Editor

C.B. CEBULSKI
Executive Editor

AXEL ALONSO
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JOE QUESADA
Chief Creative Officer

DAN BUCKLEY
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Senior Editor **FRANK PARISI**

Lucasfilm Story Group **RAYNE ROBERTS, PABLO HIDALGO,
LELAND CHEE, MATT MARTIN**



Skorii-Lei.

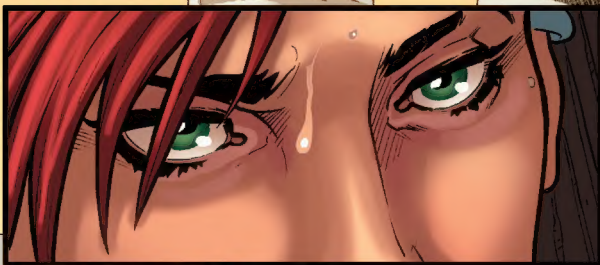
NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE EMPIRE
AND THE REBELLION,
YOU ASK ME.

TWO SIDES OF THE SAME
COIN. A COIN FULL OF
PEOPLE THAT THINK
THEY'RE HEROES TO THEIR
RESPECTIVE CAUSE.

YOU KNOW WHAT
HEROES ARE GOOD
FOR? GETTING A LOT
OF *OTHER* PEOPLE
KILLED.

AND LEAVING A MESS FOR
EVERYONE ELSE TO CLEAN
UP. I'M AN "EVERYONE ELSE."
MOST OF US ARE. NOBODY
WRITES STORIES ABOUT US.





WE'RE THE JANITORS OF THE GALAXY. WHICH IS ANNOYING, BECAUSE I USED TO BE AN ENGINEER.

THE REBELLION DESTROYED THE PRIMARY INDUSTRY HERE ON SKORII-LEI. I WAS AN UNDERWATER ENGINEER, I LOVED MY JOB.



NOW I LIFT CRATES.



OH, GREAT. STORMTROOPERS. WHAT DO THEY WANT NOW? HAVEN'T THEY DONE ENOUGH?



OH, NO.



I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANT.



...PROBABLY
BECAUSE I'VE GOT
THE LEADER OF THE
REBELLION DYING
IN MY ROOM.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL DIE IF
PRINCESS LEIA DIES? HOW MANY
PEOPLE WILL DIE IF SHE *LIVES*?
IT'S A KIND OF MATH I DON'T
UNDERSTAND, OR PERHAPS DON'T
WANT TO UNDERSTAND.

SHE STILL
ALIVE?

BREEP BOOP
BOOP.





I DIDN'T ASK FOR COLOR COMMENTARY, BRUCE. I ASKED IF SHE WAS STILL ALIVE.

BREEEEP.

I SEE THAT SHE'S STILL SLEEPING, BUT SHE'S BURNING UP.

BROOP BREE.

YES, I REALIZE THAT SHE NEEDS MEDICINE.

BOOP BREEP BROO.

BRUCE, CAN YOU NOT? PLEASE. THERE ARE STORMTROOPERS EVERYWHERE. THERE'S NOBODY WE CAN TRUST, NOT FOR SURE.



SHE'LL EITHER SURVIVE OR SHE WON'T. MIGHT BE BETTER FOR US IF SHE DOESN'T. EASIER TO GET RID OF PRINCESS LEIA'S BODY THAN IT IS TO GET RID OF HER ALIVE.

BREE BREEP BROO.

WE CAN'T SNEAK HER OUT. EVERYONE'S LOOKING FOR HER AND SHE'S GOT A VERY FAMOUS FACE. BUT IF SHE'S DEAD WE COULD...

IT'S TOO GRUESOME TO SAY OUT LOUD. EVEN FOR THE LIKES OF HER.



BREE-EEE.

LET'S JUST SAY IT WOULD INVOLVE MAKING HER... SMALLER.

WEEE-OOOO.

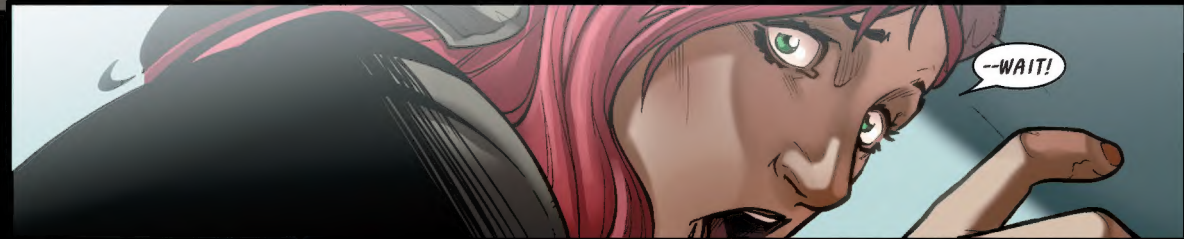
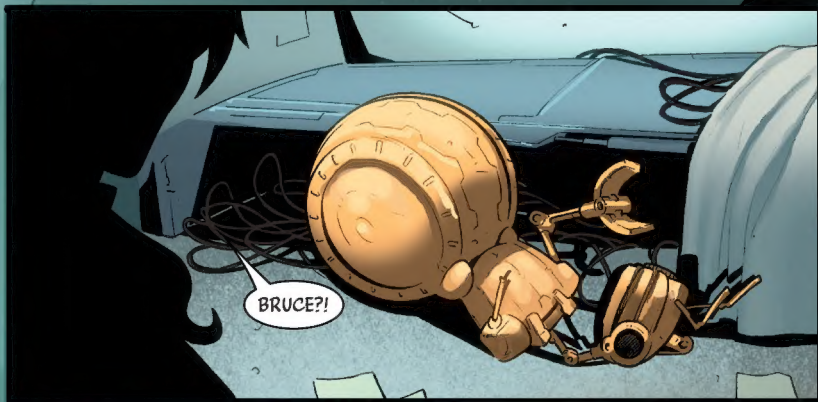
NEVER MIND. I TOLD YOU IT WAS TOO GRUESOME TO SAY, WHY'D YOU MAKE ME SAY IT?!

LOCK THE DOOR BEHIND ME. NOBODY COMES IN OR OUT BUT ME.

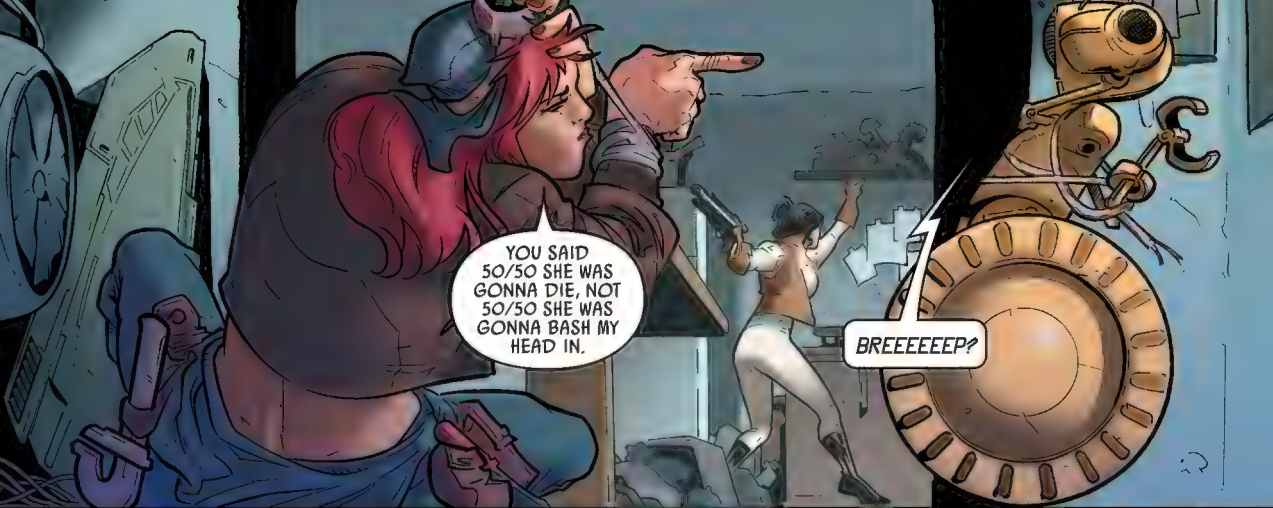
BREEEE.

Skorii-Lei Fish Market.















AT
LEAST YOUR
DROID HAS
MANNERS.

HIS
NAME IS
BRUCE.



ODD NAME
FOR A DROID. LOOKS
LIKE YOU RETROFITTED
HIM...MAYBE FOR
UNDERWATER USE?

YES. I
USED TO MINE
UNDERWATER.

USED
TO?

UNTIL THE
REBELLION AND
THE EMPIRE WRECKED
EVERYTHING HERE.
TOTALLY DESTROYED
THE WHOLE INDUSTRY.



=GAH=

OH YEAH,
SHE *MAAAAY*
HAVE SAID TO
ADD SOME TEA
TO BLUNT THE
TASTE.

I
FORGOT.



SURE
YOU
DID.



DID YOU
STITCH ME
UP?

YES.

WHY? IF
YOU DISLIKE
ME SO MUCH,
WHY HELP
ME?

I'M NOT A
MONSTER.



BUT WHY,
REALLY?

...I DON'T
KNOW.

SO, YOU
HAVE SOME
BRILLIANT IDEA
FOR GETTING
ME OUT OF
HERE?



I DO. BUT IT
DON'T GET YOU
OFF THE PLANET...
JUST OUT OF THE
AREA.

OFF PLANET
ISN'T THE PROBLEM.
I HAVE A RIDE. BUT
ONLY IF I GET TO THE
OTHER SIDE OF THE
BAY IN THE NEXT
SIX HOURS.

I CAN
DO THAT.
IT'LL BE TIGHT,
BUT I CAN
DO IT.



ALL
RIGHT. LET'S
HEAR IT.

YOU CAN
SWIM, RIGHT,
PRINCESS?

Later...

IT'S STILL TOO BIG.

WELL, THAT'S AS CLOSE AS WE'RE GETTING. AND I THINK... WITH THE DIVING HELMET ON YOU WON'T BE RECOGNIZED.

IF NOBODY LOOKS CLOSELY.

**BANG
BANG
BANG**

OPEN UP BY ORDER OF THE EMPIRE!

I BET THEY'RE GOING TO LOOK CLOSELY.

GET IN THE CUPBOARD.

I'M NOT GETTING IN A CUPBOARD!

DO IT!

I CAN HELP!

OPEN UP OR WE'LL BREAK IT DOWN!

PEFT. YOU CAN BARELY STAND!

I'LL NEVER FIT IN HERE!

YOU WILL! YOU'RE INSANELY SMALL!

UM...COMING! JUST... PUTTING ON SOME CLOTHES...AND STUFF.

WE'RE COMING IN.

HOLD ON!

FWWWWWISHHHH

WHOA. WHAT'S GOING ON?

STAND ASIDE.



MAYBE YOU
COULD TELL ME
WHAT YOU'RE--

ENEMY OF THE
EMPIRE, PRINCESS LEIA
ORGANA. WE'RE DOING A
ROOM-TO-ROOM SEARCH. AFTER
THAT WE'LL BURN THIS WHOLE DUMP
TO THE GROUND. SO IF YOU'VE
SEEN HER, SAVE YOURSELF AND
YOUR NEIGHBORS AND
GIVE HER UP NOW.

HERE IT IS. THIS
IS THE MOMENT
WHERE I CAN
CHANGE MY MIND.

I DON'T.
I'M NOT
SURE WHY.

I'VE NO
LOVE FOR THE
REBELLION OR ANY
SPOILED PRINCESS
THEY PROP UP AS
THEIR FACE.

YOU HEAR
THAT? I THINK
I LIKE THIS
ONE!

I'D NO
SOONER
PROTECT HER
THAN...

...YOU.

SMACK

CRASH

OH, NO.

OOOF.

BAM

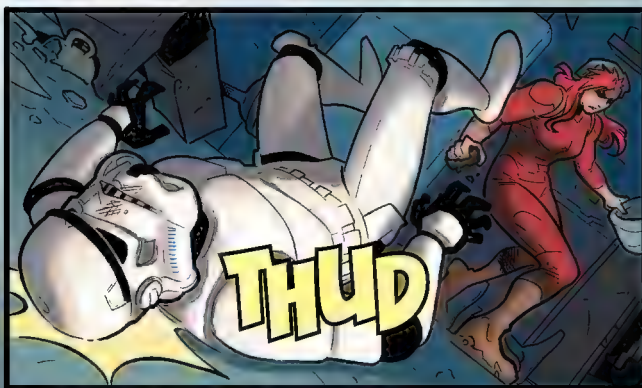
SLAM

GAH!

RIP

BAM

SQUICK



LOOKS
LIKE YOU'RE
GOING TO
NEED A NEW
BRICK.



≡HUFF≡
SLIGHTLY
NEW PLAN.



NICE AND SLOW.

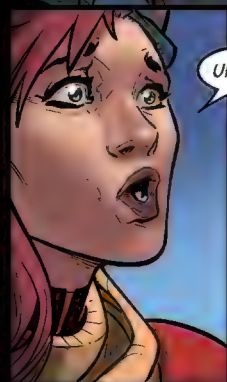
ARE YOU TALKING TO YOU, OR ME?

ME... YOU... BOTH... I DON'T KNOW!

WELL, IT'S NOT EXACTLY LOW PROFILE FOR YOU TO BE TALKING TO YOUR CART FULL OF JUNK, SO BE QUIET.



THAT IS... AN EXCELLENT POINT.



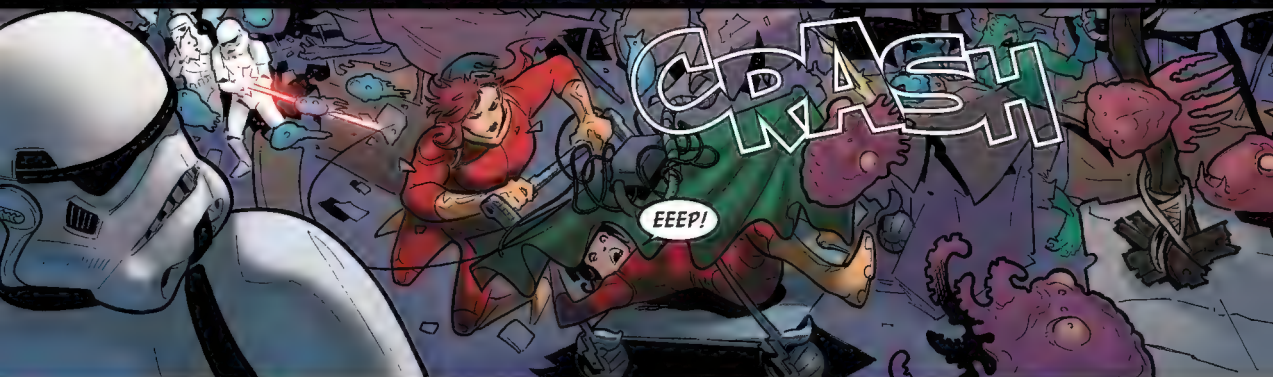
UH-OH.



WE'RE MADE. WE GOTTA RUN. UPPER DECK WINDOW, YOU SEE IT?

NO. I'M UNDER A DAMN TARP.

RIGHT. WELL... HANG ON.



EEEP!



RAAAASSSHH!



CRASH

BOING

SKID



YOINK



THEY'LL
BE DOWN
HERE ANY
MINUTE.

I KNOW.

ALSO,
OUCH.

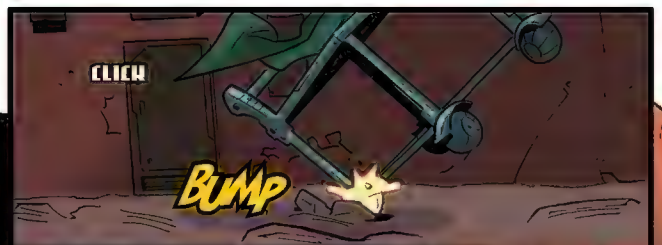
SORRY.



IN
HERE.



FLING

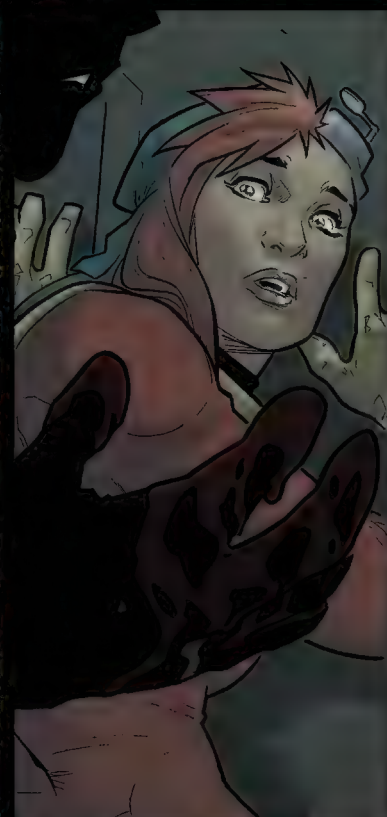


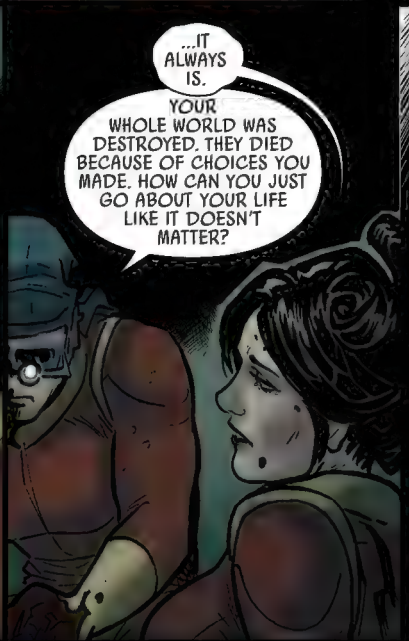
CLICK

BUMP



BUMP







TRUTH BE TOLD, IT'S NOT THEIR SACRIFICE, THEIR *DEATHS*... THAT KEEPS ME UP MOST NIGHTS.

IT'S THE QUESTION.

THE QUESTION OF...IF I WOULD DO ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY.



IMAGINE TRYING TO LOOK YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR EVERY DAY ONCE YOU REALIZE THAT THE ANSWER IS NO.

NO, YOU *WOULD* DO IT ALL AGAIN, YOU WOULD STILL SACRIFICE ALL OF THOSE INNOCENT LIVES IF IT MEANS STOPPING THE EMPIRE.



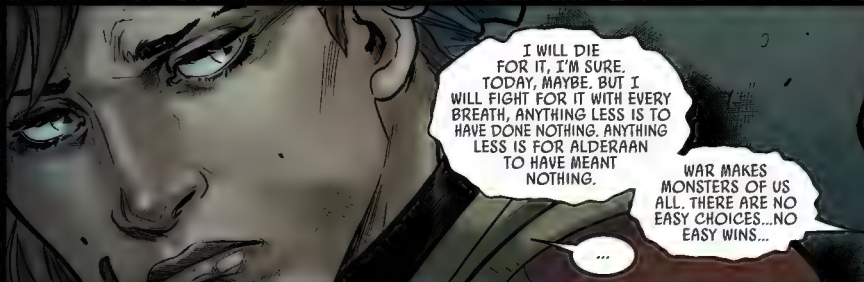
PRINCESS. REBEL. POLITICIAN. DAUGHTER. FRIEND. FIGHTER. SURVIVOR. BETRAYER. MONSTER.

THESE ARE WORDS OTHERS USE TO DESCRIBE ME, AND WORDS I ALSO USE FOR MYSELF. SOME FIT MORE THAN OTHERS.



BUT I WOULD RATHER BE A MONSTER THAT BELIEVES IN SOMETHING, THAT WOULD SACRIFICE EVERYTHING TO MAKE THE GALAXY BETTER, THAN BE SOMEONE GIFTED WHO SITS ON THE SIDELINES AND WATCHES AS IF IT HAS NO CONSEQUENCE TO THEM.

REBELLION IS AN IDEA BIGGER THAN ANY OF US. IT HAS TO BE TO INSPIRE. IT IS *ALIVE*. ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS WEAKEST LINK. WHAT MATTERS IS THAT IT SURVIVES US, THAT IT GROWS *BEYOND US*.



I WILL DIE FOR IT, I'M SURE. TODAY, MAYBE. BUT I WILL FIGHT FOR IT WITH EVERY BREATH, ANYTHING LESS IS TO HAVE DONE NOTHING. ANYTHING LESS IS FOR ALDERAAN TO HAVE MEANT NOTHING.

WAR MAKES MONSTERS OF US ALL. THERE ARE NO EASY CHOICES...NO EASY WINS...



PRINCESS? PRINCESS, IT'S TIME TO GO. CAN YOU MOVE?

...YES.



IT'S JUST
UNDER A THOUSAND
METERS. THAT SHOULD PUT
US RIGHT ON TOP OF
WHERE YOUR FRIENDS
ARE SUPPOSED
TO BE.

CAN YOU
MAKE IT?

NO...
PROBLEM.



BREE-
BROOPBREEP.

SHHH. I
KNOW.

I HEARD
THAT.

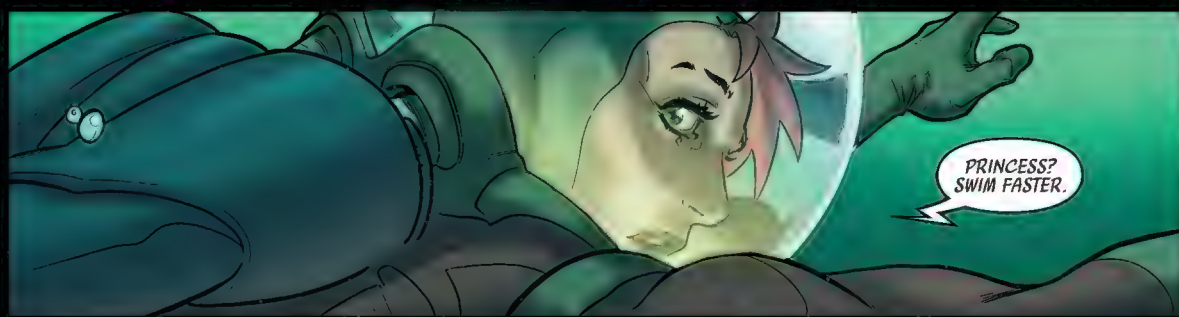


WHAT
DID I TELL
YOU?!

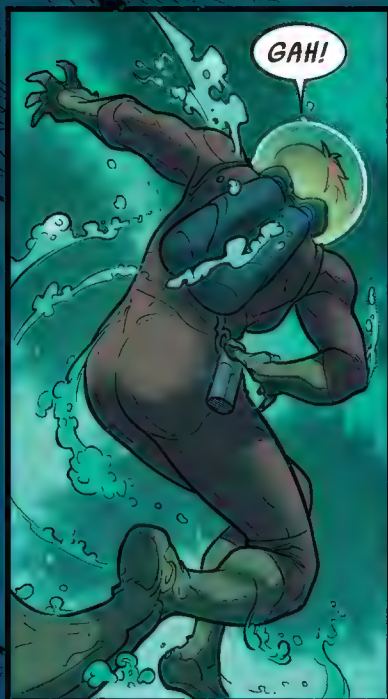
BEEP
REEP.

KEEP IT
UP, BUDDY,
SHE ALREADY
DISASSEMBLED
YOU ONCE
TODAY.

BR0000000.



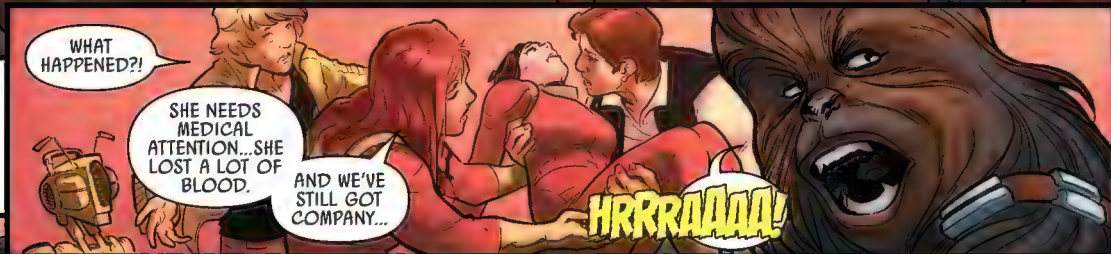
PRINCESS?
SWIM FASTER.







LEIA!



WHAT HAPPENED?!

SHE NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION... SHE LOST A LOT OF BLOOD.

AND WE'VE STILL GOT COMPANY...

HRRRAAAA!



GO! GET HER ON THE FALCON! WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.

PEW
PEW
PEW



I CAN SEE THEM FOR A MOMENT THE WAY SHE MUST.

PEW PEW

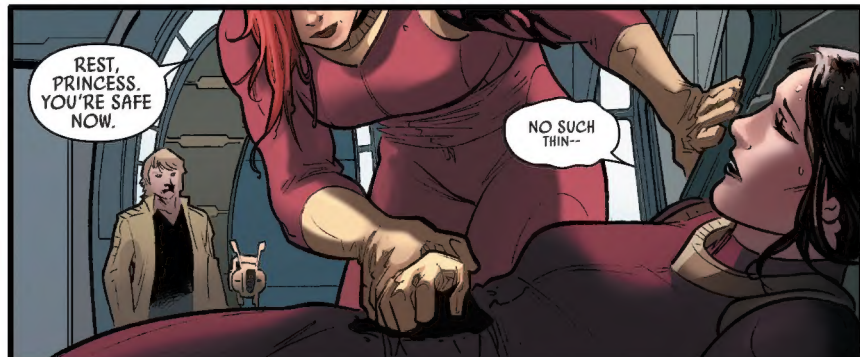
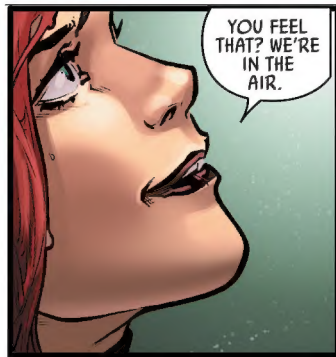


PEW
PEW

RAARGHHH!

NO LONGER JUST PEOPLE. BUT INSTEAD LIVING, BREATHING IDEAS ALL CONNECTED AND UNENDING. STRONGER BECAUSE THEY'RE ONE.

THEY'RE SORT OF... BEAUTIFUL.





YOU LOOK BETTER.

YES. THANK YOU.

YOU LOOK...IS THAT HAN'S SHIRT?

YEAH, HAD TO RIP THE SLEEVES OFF THOUGH.

HEH. OH HE'S GONNA LOVE THAT.

I'M SORRY YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN.

I KNEW WHAT IT MEANT WHEN I FOUND YOU AND BROUGHT YOU INTO MY HOME.

I'M STILL SORRY...

BUT?



BUT I HOPE YOU'LL JOIN US. WE ALWAYS NEED SMART, CAPABLE PEOPLE, PASH.

AND WE'LL NEVER TURN DOWN SOMEONE THAT CAN BASH PEOPLE OVER THE HEAD WITH A BRICK AS WELL AS YOU CAN, EITHER.

YOU SHOULD TRY TO NOT MAKE JOKES. YOU'RE AWFUL AT IT.



WHY WOULD YOU WANT "SOMEONE GIFTED WHO SITS ON THE SIDELINES AND WATCHES AS IF IT HAS NO CONSEQUENCE TO THEM"?

I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT. I'M SORRY I WAS SO HARD ON YOU, I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE.



SURE YOU DID. THAT'S WHAT YOU DO, RIGHT?

...



I BET IF I ASK THAT GUY, HE'LL AGREE.

...DON'T DO THAT.



THEN ADMIT IT.

YES. THAT'S WHAT I DO.

WELL, IT WORKED THIS TIME.

IT WILL PROBABLY GET YOU KILLED.



YES, WELL, WE ALL HAVE TO DIE. WHY NOT DO IT PAINFULLY BUT WITH MEANING?

I THINK MAYBE WE CAN BE FRIENDS NOW.

~~ETCH~~ I DON'T NEED ANY PRINCESSY FRIENDS.

WHAT ABOUT ONES THAT SAVE YOUR LIFE?

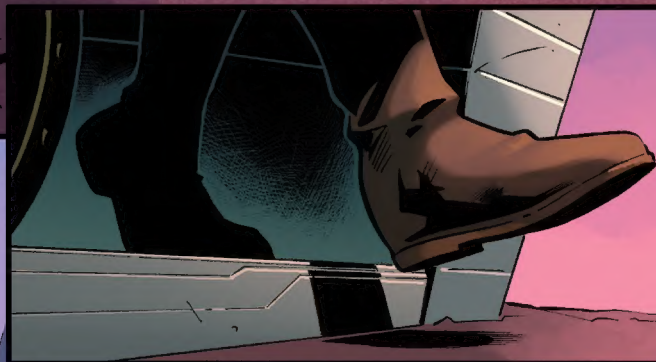
...MAAAYBE.

LEIA'S WRONG, THOUGH. I MEAN, SHE DOES IT FOR ALL THE REASONS SHE SAID, I BELIEVE THAT. NOBODY LIES WHEN THEY THINK IT MIGHT BE THEIR LAST WORDS.

BUT THERE'S MORE HERE. SEEING THESE PEOPLE, THIS FAMILY. THEY'RE BOUND BY SOMETHING POWERFUL, LOOKING AT THEM, IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE **NOT** TO BELIEVE.

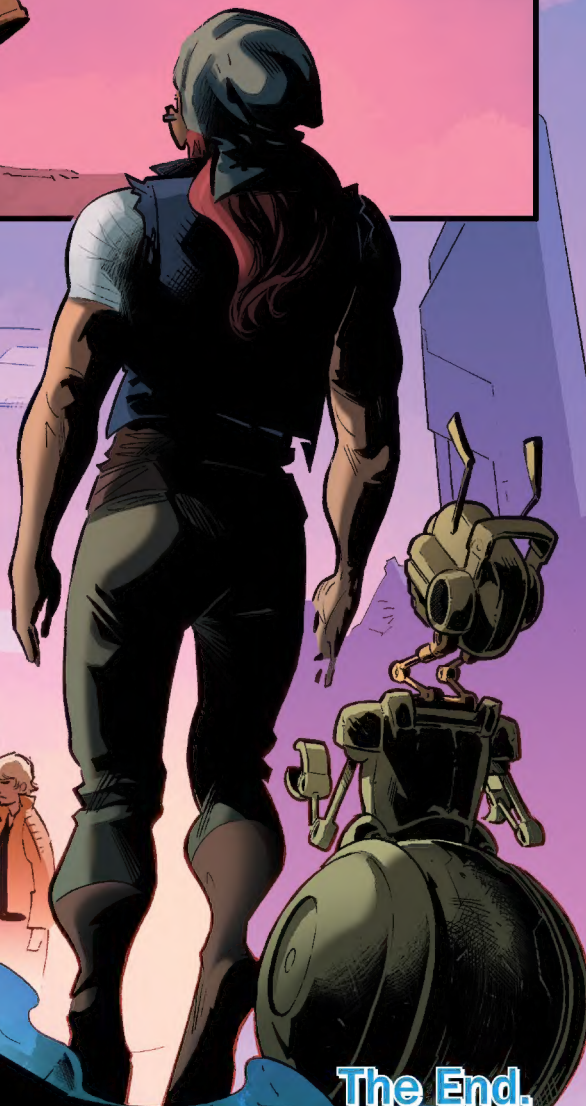
SHE TALKED OF THE REBELLION BEING A LIVING THING, BUT WHAT SHE NEGLECTED TO MENTION WAS **HOPE**. HOPE IS A LIVING THING, TOO... SEEING IT NOW I SUDDENLY REALIZE I'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE, NOT WITH THIS CLARITY, AT LEAST.

BUT I SEE IT NOW. I DON'T THINK I COULD FORGET WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE...WHAT IT **FEELS** LIKE.



SO YEAH. I'M IN.

BRING ON THE PAINFUL DEATH. SO LONG AS IT COMES HAND IN HAND WITH **HOPE...I'M IN.**



The End.

STAR WARS™ NEXT ISSUE!

